admirable constitution.! Indeed all actual sin seems to consist in voluntarily allowing, following, or exciting motive principles condemned in that particular exercise by the law of God.*

SECT. III.—GOVERNING PBINCIPLES THAT AEE EVIL.

We are now entering on topics of considerable difficulty and delicacy. Some sensitive minds shrink from the anatomy to which we are to subject human motives, and the manner in which; in our dissection, we must lay bare the muscles and organs of human life. But bold spirits have entered this region, and drawn from it the most pernicious doctrine^ and we must follow them, were it only to counteract the evil use which they have made of their observations.

In this inquiry, great care must be taken, first, not to make God chargeable with the evil principles, which serve a useful purpose in the government of the world; and, secondly, to show, that though there may be beneficial ends served by the sinful affection or principle, the guilt of the agent is not thereby diminished.

There is a constant tendency in the present day to fall into the latter of these errors. Crimes are discovered to be links in the chain of causes on which hang good and glorious results; and, in approving of the issue, historians have sometimes been inclined to justify all the steps which have led to it. One class of writers, delighted with the order, the peace, and physical comfort found under some despotical governments, have been led to transfer their praises to the very acts of tyranny and

* Certain moralists have got themselves confused in their estimate of man, by observing that moral evil lies in the abuse of principles good in themselves. They give to man all the credit of the good principle, and excuse the evil on the ground that the motive principle in itself is good. But they forget that the instinctive principles of action, while good in this sense, that they have a beneficial tendency, do not imply any moral good on the part of the possessor, unless a good action of

the will has attached itself to them. The sin consists in an act of the will permitting or causing that which God has made good to become evil. It has been said that man cannot, in his greatest violence of wickedness, desire moral evil as moral evil, but for some ulterior end. Be it so, that God has so fenced human nature by this limitation of instinctive motive principles, it is certain that man does all he can in wickedness, for he allows and chooses moral evil, knowing it to be evil, as a means of gratifying inferior motives.